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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses current and future research on alternative supervisory approaches matched to developmental levels of teachers. The two major questions for research were: (1) Is there an interaction between individual characteristics of teachers and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance? and (2) Can supervisors acquire greater flexibility in using different approaches? Answers, drawn from prior research, include: (1) Experienced teachers do vary on their preferences between non-directive and collaborative supervisory approaches; (2) Beginning teachers prefer a directive supervisory approach; (3) A correlation between teacher conceptual level with preference of performance with certain supervisory approaches has not been found; and (4) There has not yet been research conducted on supervisory flexibility in acquiring new interpersonal behaviors. Research on supervisory flexibility is about to begin. At least three studies will be conducted in 1983-84 to find further answers to the aforementioned questions. Several diagrams, references, and a list of studies in progress and to be undertaken are appended. (Author/JMK)

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DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH ON SUPERVISORY CONFERENCE APPROACHES APPROPRIATE TO DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS OF TEACHERS

By

Carl D. Glickman

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to discuss current and future research on alternative supervisory approaches matched to developmental levels of teachers. The two major questions for research are 1) Is there an interaction between individual characteristics of teachers and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance? and 2) Can supervisors acquire greater flexibility in using different supervisory approaches? Research has begun to answer these questions. Experience of teachers appears to be related to preferred supervisory approach. A correlation between conceptual level of teachers with preference of performance with certain supervisory approaches has not been found. Research on supervisory flexibility is about to commence. At least three studies will be conducted in 1983-84 to find further answers to these questions.

In this brief paper, current and future research on alternative supervisory approaches matched to developmental levels of teachers will be discussed. In doing so, it is first necessary to review the theory of alternative approaches as written in the monograph entitled Developmental Supervision published by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (Glickman, 1981).

THEORY OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPERVISION

Clinical supervision has been described as a structure and set of procedures for working "face to face" with teachers to improve instruction. The structure contains a minimum of five steps: 1) pre-conference, 2) observation 3) analysis of data 4) post-conference and 5) critique of the previous steps (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969; Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1980; and Acheson and Gall, 1980). Within that structure, there are various interpersonal behaviors that can occur between a supervisor and teacher that lead to a plan for instructional improvement.

My concern has been with those interpersonal behaviors that supervisors use in a conference with a teacher. Based on personal experiences, observations, and recordings of post-conferences with teachers, the following ten interpersonal behaviors have been categorized along a supervisory behavior continuum. Please refer to Figure 1.

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The supervisory behaviors on the left hand side of the continuum (listening, clarifying, and demonstrating) allow for the teacher to control the discussion and to determine the ultimate plan for instructional improvement. Those supervisory behaviors in the middle of the continuum (presenting, problem solving, and negotiating) allow for a sharing of control between supervisor and teacher and a joint decision as to future improvement. Those behaviors on the right hand side of the continuum (demonstrating, directing, standardizing, and reinforcing) allow the supervisor to control the discussion and determine the plan. From these categories of behaviors, three interpersonal supervisory approaches have been identified as non-directive, collaborative and directive. The non-directive approach provides for a teacher self-plan, the collaborative approach provides for a mutual contract, and the directive approach provides for a supervisor assignment given to a teacher.

The theory of developmental supervision is based on predictions of likely matches of supervisory approaches with developmental characteristics of teachers. Levels of abstraction and commitment are two individual characteristics of teachers that relate to some measures of teaching effectiveness and are developmental (Murphy and Brown, 1970; Hunt and Joyce, 1967; Parkay, 1979; Oja, 1979; Fuller, 1969; Ayers, 1980; and Adams, Hutchinson, and Martray, 1980). Both characteristics are used as criteria for choosing a particular supervisory approach.

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Teachers with low abstraction (as evidenced by concrete, rigid thought) and low commitment (as evidenced by self-survival concerns) are predicted to be best matched with a supervisor using a directive approach. Teachers with low abstraction and high commitment (as evidenced by altruistic concerns); and teachers with high abstractions (as evidenced by consideration of multiple sources of information and solutions) and low commitment; and teachers of moderate abstraction and commitment are predicted to be best matched with a supervisor using variations of a collaborative approach. Teachers with high abstraction and high commitment are predicted to be best matched with a supervisor using a non-directive style.

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS?

A "best" match between supervisory approach and teacher abstraction and commitment can be tested according to teacher preference and/or performance. A teacher who prefers (or positively perceives) a certain supervisory approach over other approaches can be said to be best matched with that approach. Another way to judge best match is to assess the actual behavioral change that a teacher demonstrates in his/her classroom after a conference. For example, if a group of teachers of low abstraction and low commitment change their behaviors in a desired direction after receiving a directive supervisory approach significantly more than comparative groups of teachers who have received collaborative or non-directive approaches, than it can be concluded that there is a best match.

Obviously, a theory needs to be tested to determine if it does contain some elements of "truth". Two major questions for research are:

1) Is there an interaction between individual characteristics of teachers and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance? and,

2) Can supervisors acquire greater flexibility in using different supervisory approaches?

More specific questions about individual teacher characteristics are:

1) Is there an interaction between teacher conceptual level and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance?
2) Is there an interaction between teacher age/experience and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance?
3) Is there an interaction between teacher commitment level and supervisory approach with regard to preference and performance?
4) If conceptual and commitment levels and supervisory approach do not interact with supervisory approach, are there other personal measurements such as interpersonal trust, dogmatism, sense of personal efficacy, and attitude that are better predicters of individual preference and performance?

Research on supervisor's acquisition of new behaviors are exploring the following questions.

1) Can supervisors learn and use different combinations of supervisory interpersonal behaviors with teachers in clinical situations that differ from their current behaviors?
2) Can supervisors demonstrate different behaviors in both simulated and real clinical supervision situations?
3) Do teachers perceive and behave towards a supervisor differently when he/she employs new behaviors?

WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

First, it is known that experienced teachers do vary on their preferences between non-directive and collaborative supervisory approaches. This past year Ginkel completed a study of experienced teachers' preferences

for supervisory approaches and found results strikingly similar to the results of studies done by Blumberg and Weber in 1968. When a stratified sample of over two hundred, K-6 teachers were asked for their preference of supervisory approach, 141 or 57% of teachers preferred a non-directive approach, 63 or 30% preferred a supervisor to work with them collaboratively, and only 6 or 3% preferred a supervisor to work with them directively (Ginkel, Inpress). Blumberg and Weber's study used two hundred and ten experienced teachers. They found that experienced teachers split primarily into two groups. One group perceived the supervisory behaviors of listening to the teacher as well as presenting the supervisor's own views, i.e. collaboration as most positive. The other group of teachers saw supervisory behaviors of primarily listening, reflecting, and asking the teacher, i.e. non-directive as most positive. Therefore, with both Ginkel and Blumberg and Weber's studies, it can be said that few experienced teachers see directive behaviors as most positive.

Second, it is known that beginning teachers prefer a directive supervisory approach. Zonca (1972), Lorch (1981), and Vudovich (1976) used pre-service teachers as the population for their studies that explored the effects of supervisory directness as compared to non-directness. These studies showed pre-service teachers preference for directness in influencing subjects to change their teaching behaviors. Copeland and Atkinson (1978) used sixty-six student teachers to rate two tape recordings of a supervisory conference, one in which the supervisor was very directive and one in which the supervisor was non-directive. Subjects expressed a clear preference for directive supervisory behavior. Copeland (1980) used the same scripts with seventy-one secondary student teachers for further study of direct and non-direct supervisory approaches. The results again indicated a disposition of student teachers for the directive supervisory approach over the non-directive approach.

Teacher preference for supervisory approach appears to have a relationship with experience. Neophyte teachers prefer a directive approach by their supervisors. Experienced teachers vary on their preference of supervisory behaviors between non-directive and collaborative. Between the two approaches collaborative supervisory behaviors are preferred by the majority of teachers. Directive supervisory behaviors are preferred by only a meager minority of experienced teachers.

Third, A correlation between teacher conceptual level with preference or performance with certain supervisory approaches has not been found. Ginkel's study (Inpress, 1983) found no link between experienced teacher's conceptual level and preferred approach. There are other studies currently being conducted by Wolbrink, Konke, and Calhoun, which will look further at possible relationships of teacher conceptual levels with supervision. Whether there exists links between conceptual level, supervisory approach, and classroom change is still an open question.

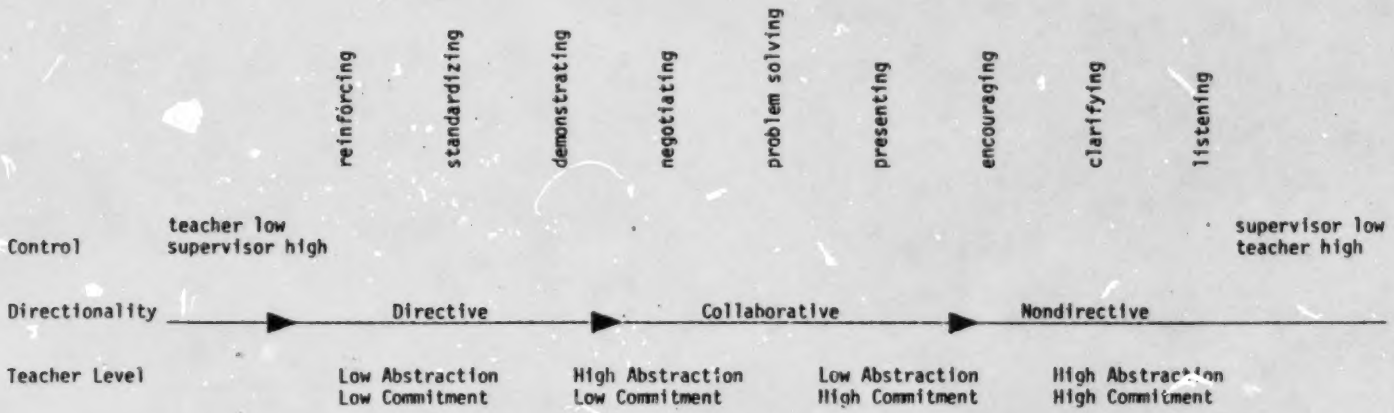
Fourth, there has not yet been research conducted on supervisory flexibility in acquiring new interpersonal behaviors. The first study of supervisor's acquisition of new behaviors is planned for next winter by Gordon with school supervisors in Southern Ohio. They will be assessed according to their own approach and trained in all three approaches. Subsequently the clinical conferences held by the supervisors will be taped, transcribed, and analyzed by trained observers to see if change in interpersonal behaviors has occurred.

CONCLUSION

Research on the theory of developmental supervision has just begun. At the University of Georgia, one study has been completed, two are in progress, and at least two other studies are to begin next year. Hopefully

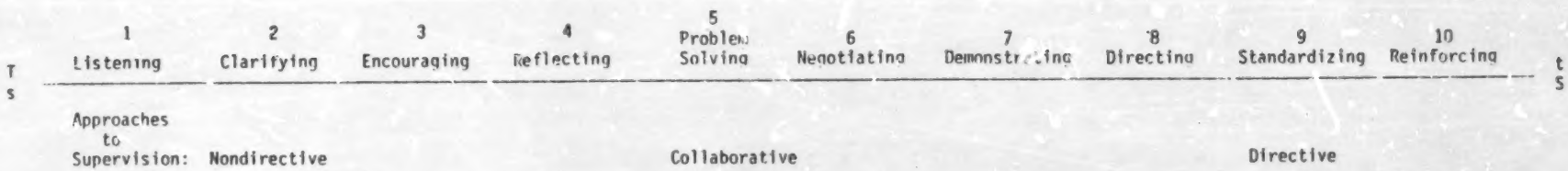
over the next three to five years, we will learn more about whether there are appropriate matches of supervisory interpersonal behaviors with individual characteristics of teachers. Others are invited to join in this investigation. In doing so, we will be better able to understand the interpersonal process within the clinical setting and hopefully be able to assist supervisors in using behaviors that promote teacher growth and instructional improvement.

FIGURE 2. DEVELOPMENTAL MATCH AND DIRECTIONALITY OF THE SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOR CONTINUUM



Adapted from Glickman, C.D. Developmental supervision: Alternative practice for helping teachers improve instruction. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1981, p. 49.

FIGURE 1. THE SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOR CONTINUUM



Key: T = Maximum teacher responsibility S = Maximum supervisor responsibility
t = Minimum teacher responsibility s = Minimum supervisor responsibility

From Glickman, C.D. Developmental supervision: Alternative practice for helping teachers improve instruction. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1981, p. 10.

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Studies of Developmental Supervision

In Progress

Ms. Karen Konke - Relationship of teacher conceptual level with utilization of supervisory services. Department of Curriculum and Supervision, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

Ms. Karen Wolbrink - Relationship of Teacher's satisfaction with in-service and classroom improvement based on matching teacher levels of abstraction and commitment with delivery of in-service. Fulton County Board of Education, 786 Cleveland Avenue, S.W. Atlanta, GA 30315.

Future Studies

Ms. Emily Calhoun - Relationship of teacher conceptual level and classroom performance with desired supervisory assistance. Department of Curriculum and Supervision, University of Georgia, College of Education, Athens, GA 30602.

Mr. Steve Gordon - Testing supervisors' abilities to acquire and apply new interpersonal behaviors. College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Supervision, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.